



The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center

IRC Yerevan Times

January-February, 2011 Volume 7, Issue 1

New Year greetings from the U.S. Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch:



Dear Armenian people!

Let me congratulate you on the New Year.

2010 marked another positive year in Armenian-American relations, highlighted by President Sargsian's visit to the U.S. and Secretary of State Clinton's visit to Armenia. I hope that the coming year will strengthen these ties, and our partnership will continue to flourish.

I want to express my deep appreciation for the extraordinary warmth and hospitality the Armenian people have shown me in every part of this beautiful country. For all of us at the American embassy, it is truly an honor to live and work in Armenia.

I hope that 2011 will be a year of peace, happiness, and prosperity for every Armenian family. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

25-TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. FEDERAL HOLIDAY: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Each year on the third Monday of January schools, federal offices, post offices and banks across America close to celebrate the newest American national holiday - Martin Luther King Day.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the most prominent leader in the African American Civil Rights movement. He advocated non-violent means of social change, and worked to bring about social, political and economic equality for African-American citizens. In the 1950's and 1960's, this iconic figure in the advancement of the modern American liberalism won the support of millions of people both black and white. In 1964, King became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Fifteen years after Dr. King's death, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill into law making the third Monday of January a national holiday to celebrate the birth and life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The first national celebration took place three years later. In 2011, the 25-th anniversary of Martin Luther King Day falls on January 17.

For further reading on Martin Luther King Jr. and Black History Month, please



visit the following web pages at:

[Americans Celebrate Achievements of Martin Luther King Jr.](#) Civil rights giant fought for principles with universal applicability;

[Free At Last](#), a history of the civil rights movement first published in 2009;

[Beyond Dr. King](#), a collection of profiles documenting African-American achievement.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY, COMMONLY KNOWN AS PRESIDENTS DAY

"Presidents Day" is the common name for Washington's Birthday, a joint holiday to honor both Abraham Lincoln and [George Washington](#), as well as all the other men who have served as president. Presidents Day is a United States [federal holiday](#) celebrated on the third Monday of February.

On June 28, 1968, the bill kept the official name Washington's Birthday, but by the mid-1980s, with a push from advertisers, the term "Presidents' Day" began its public appearance. Although [Lincoln's birthday](#), February 12, was never a federal holiday, approximately a dozen state governments have officially renamed their Washington's Birthday observances as "Presidents' Day", "Washington and Lincoln Day", or other such designations. This explains why the chosen date falls between the two men's birthdays.

In 2011, Washington's Birthday, or Presidents Day, will be celebrated on February 21.

Storytelling Program at the Yerevan American Corner

On December 10, 2010, U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Officer Sean O'Hara read children's stories to 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students at the Yerevan American Corner. He gave an animated presentation of two popular children's books: "The Giving Tree," by Shel Silverstein; and "Stellaluna," by Janell Cannon.



School students from Yerevan's Shahamir Shamiryan College enthusiastically participated in the program, asking questions about the stories' characters and authors.

Sean started his reading with "The Giving Tree" which was first published in 1964. The Giving Tree is a tale about a relationship between a young boy and a tree. It has been translated into more than 30 languages. Then Sean read Stellaluna which is a fictional female fruit bat in a children's book of the same name, written in 1994.



English teachers, Mrs. Gohar Hakobyan and Jane Savadyan, accompanied their students. At the end of program all the students received souvenir badges with American and Armenian flags. The IRC director



awarded a book about the Greek hero Hercules to the student who correctly answered a question about the famous American cartoon character Batman. Another book on Rock Music was donated to English teacher Gohar Hakobyan to be used for story hours at the school.



About 30 students enjoyed a lively story hour in the American Corner. They heard touching stories about friendship and tolerance, as well as many interesting facts about fruit bats.

Video and audio interpretations of "The Giving Tree" are available here: <http://www.squidoo.com/thegivingtree#module8894094>

How to Write Personal Statements, CV's, and Cover Letters

On December 24, 2010 American Corner Yerevan organized a public lecture entitled "Helpful Tips on Writing Personal Statements, CV's, and Cover Letters." Our guest speaker was English Language Fellow Peter Bohan.

The lecturer presented detailed information about writing personal statements that emphasize the writer's creativity, self-confidence, motivation, ability to overcome difficulty, and ability to collaborate with others. He talked about many important elements to be included in an essay, as well as some comments that are better to leave out. He also noted the importance of the sincerity of statement of purpose, and illustrated what kinds of life experiences can be included in it.

Mr. Bohan also talked about how best to write formal letters and CVs, including both the content and format. He showed some examples of different CVs and answered the participants' questions related to them. Around 30 people were present at the lecture, who were mainly alumni interested in applying for a job or a university scholarship.

IRC ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

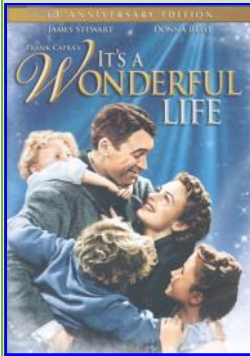


AMERICAN WINTER HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

On Saturday, December 18, American Corner Yerevan organized a public lecture entitled “American Winter Holiday Traditions.” The guest speaker was U.S. Embassy Economic and Commercial Officer Megan Bouldin.

Mrs. Bouldin presented four holidays that are celebrated in the US during winter. Notably she talked about Diwali, which is an important five-day festival in Hinduism, Jainism, and Sikhism and is popularly known as the “festival of lights;” Kwanzaa, which was created by Maulana Karenga in 1966 as the first specifically African American holiday; Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights is an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the re-dedication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt of the 2nd century BC; and Christmas, which is a well-known holiday observed generally on December 25 to commemorate the birth of Jesus, the central figure of Christianity. The lecturer focused on customs and traditions connected to Christmas, as it is very popular. Even non-Christians often celebrate Christmas in the United States. Mrs. Bouldin shared her experiences and very delicious cookies that are traditionally baked in her family.

MONDAY MOVIE PROGRAM AT THE IRC



On December 20, during the Monday Movie program, the IRC screened “It’s A Wonderful Life” (1946) by Frank Capra. Though it is considered to be a classic Christmas movie, the story isn’t really about only Christmas. It is about the struggle between a man and his role in society.

After the movie U.S. Embassy Political Officer Charles Lobdell moderated a discussion with about 50 students and faculty from different universities.

Young audience enjoyed the movie. During the discussion many students mentioned that life is really wonderful and we have to appreciate each moment of our life. At the end everybody agreed with the movie’s main idea that each person's life touches so many other lives. One of the participants mentioned during the informal discussion that although the “richest and meanest man in town” was not punished, the unity and

faith of common people was like a punishment for people like the villain, Mr. Potter.

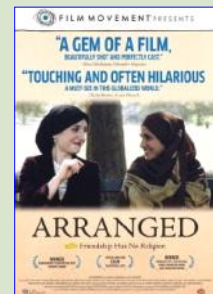
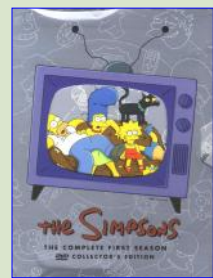
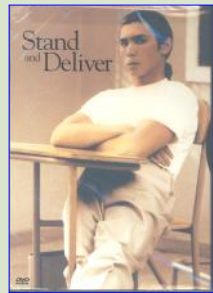
IRC FALL MOVIE CALENDAR

As part of its movie series, an English language film is shown at the U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center every third Monday of the month. A 30 minute English-language discussion follows each movie.

The next movie will be shown on January 24 at 14:30pm. The IRC will feature “Stand and Deliver” (1988) by Ramón Menéndez. Storyline: Jaime Escalante is a mathematics teacher in a school in a hispanic neighbourhood. Convinced that his students have potential, he adopts unconventional teaching methods to try and turn gang members and “no-hopers” into some of the country's top algebra and calculus students.

Read more about the movie at: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0094027/>

Please contact: ircyerevan@usa.am or



WHAT'S NEW AT THE AMERICAN CORNERS?

IN GYUMRI: GYUMRI AC HOSTED A PUBLIC LECTURE ON COMMUNITY-BASED DESIGN



On December 8, 2010 the American Corner Gyumri, in partnership with the U.S. Embassy, organized a public lecture in English entitled "Community-based Design and Planning." Our guest speaker was U.S. Fulbright Scholar Jane Britt Greenwood.

Ms. Greenwood began the lecture by explaining the notions "Top Down" and "Bottom Up." She stated that Top Down design focuses on economic capital, while the Bottom Up design focuses on social capital. The former brings about urban renewal, individual profit, and maximum density with minimum infrastructures, while the latter bring about social equity, community profit and it also maximizes group exchange.

She also stated that Community-based Design and Planning is a philosophy of design that focuses on the creation and management of environments for people by establishing active partnerships between community residents and institutions.

At the end the students spoke about the tangible and the intangible properties of the buildings they would like to save in Gyumri.

About 28 people participated in the lecture, including students group from the Gyumri Pedagogical Institute, three U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, two NGO representatives and the IRC Director. Students learned many helpful and interesting facts about design and planning.

For additional information about the American Corners in Armenia please visit:

<http://www.americancorners.am>

VIRTUAL LIBRARY DATABASES SET AT THE IRC AMERICAN CORNERS

Dear American Corner friends,

IRC is happy to announce the arrival of a set of databases from EBSCO Publishing, Gale, CQ Resources. EBSCO Publishing includes mostly full-text periodical collections, with an emphasis on peer-reviewed journals. Major components are Academic Search Premier with 4,600 full-text journals and Business Source Premier with more than 2,150 full-text journals. Smaller, more specialized full-text databases include Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts with Full Text, Regional Business News, Fuente Academica, Business Source Premier, and Literary Reference Center etc.

EBSCO Publishing Resources include

more than 560 core journals, nearly 125 selective journals, 50 priority journals; plus books, research reports and proceedings. This database also contains full text for more than 300 journals on law, literature, and other fields.

Gale Resources includes: Gale Virtual Reference Library, Gale Directory Library, Gale Science in Context, Global Issues in Context.

CQ Global Researcher Plus Archive: Reports covering the most current and controversial global issues of the day, from 1923 to the present.

Oxford Analytica provides timely, authoritative, forward-looking analysis of geopolitical and macroeconomic events and issues every business day.

You can also have access to **Ebrary Public Library, Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica for Kids, and Pop Culture Universe.**

To access the Virtual Library go to: <http://vlib.interchange.at/> Ask the American Corner Coordinator to enter the password.

ROUNDTABLES AT THE IRC

AMERICAN SUITE PERFORMANCE BY ARINA ARARATYAN'S MODERN DANCE GROUP

On November 24, 2010 the U.S. Embassy Yerevan Information Resource Center (IRC) hosted a roundtable discussion for Art, Dance, Cinematography and Theatre students from Yerevan's different universities and colleges.

The roundtable was moderated by Arina Araratyan and her Modern Dance Group members. She presented the emergence and development of modern dance in the United States. Ms. Araratyan also is a previous participant in the U.S. Government-sponsored International Visitor Leadership Program. Arevik Ashkharoyan, producer of the group, shared her knowledge and experience in organizing concerts. Varduhi Alexanyan, dancer, told about her experience of dancing modern American dances.

At the beginning 24 participants enjoyed excerpts from performances of "Awakening" and "American Suite." The performances feature stunning choreography set to the music of Richard Bona, Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald and Nina Simone.

The discussion was focused on particular aspects of the choreography, decorations, and costumes featured in the "American Suite." Students mentioned that modern dancing is new to Armenian audiences, but it has a great future.



ROUNDTABLE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

As part of the U.S. Embassy's activities to mark the **International Day for the Elimination**

of Violence against Women, the U.S. Embassy Yerevan Information Resource Center (IRC) hosted a roundtable discussion on domestic violence on December 1. Participants included 32 future lawyers, police officers, and psychologists from Yerevan State University, American University of Armenia, the Police



Academy of RA, Yerevan State Pedagogical University and Gladzor University.

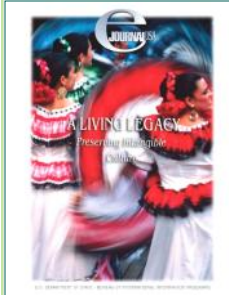
Three featured speakers facilitated the discussion: Susanna Vardanyan, President of Women's Rights Center NGO; Ani Dallakyan, Grants Manager and Research Associate, Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis, AUA; and Arthur Davtyan, Deputy Head of Department on Crimes against Person, Prosecutor General's office, RA. Mr. Davtyan is a previous participant in the U.S. Government-sponsored International Visitor Leadership Program.

The featured speakers shared their knowledge and experience in the field of domestic violence.

Marie L. Yovanovitch, U.S. Ambassador to Armenia, welcomed all the participants and participated in the discussion. Steve Kessler, Resident Legal Advisor of U.S. Embassy, contributed to the discussion with a brief overview of U.S. law on domestic violence.

This round table actively engaged 32 university students in addressing a sensitive and challenging social problem. The discussion brought out various points of view and constructive debate among the students and three featured speakers who represented the government, NGO activists, and academia.

EJOURNAL USA: A LIVING LEGACY: PRESERVING INTANGIBLE CULTURE



The cultural heritage of the United States is rich, diverse and grounded in the contributions of many peoples. It includes millennia-old indigenous Native American culture and tradition and spans the customs, culture and art of the many immigrant

groups who have settled in the United States over past centuries and generations.

American culture remains vibrant and of global interest precisely because men and women in every part of the nation preserve intangible forms of artistic cultural expression by living them. This issue of eJournal USA explores their stories.

Highlights:

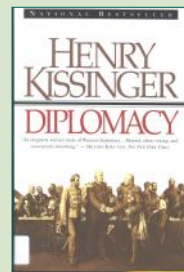
- "Intangible Cultural Heritage A New Horizon for Cultural Democracy" by James Counts Early and Ryan F. Manion at the Smithsonian Institution
- "Saving Endangered Languages in the United States" by Juliette Blevins of the Endangered Language Alliance
- "Being Multilingual", Quotes from various writers, academics and public figures exploring the challenges and benefits of linguistic diversity in the United States.
- Interactive Resources features "Preserving World Cultures", The U.S. Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation
- Special features include a photo gallery of "Americans Preserving Cultural Heritage", "Who's Right?: Repatriation of Cultural Property" debate
- Additional Resources: A selection of books, articles and websites on preserving cultural heritage.

The URL for the journal is: <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html#1010>

IRC NEW ARRIVALS

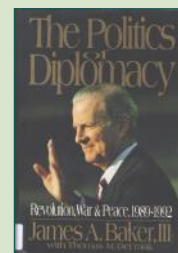
HENRY KISSINGER: Diplomacy

Diplomacy is a 1994 book written by former National Security Advisor and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. It is a sweep of the history of international relations and the art of diplomacy, largely concentrating on the 20th century and the Western World. Kissinger, as a great believer in the realist school of international relations, focuses strongly upon the concepts of the balance of power in Europe prior to World War One, *raison d'état* and Realpolitik throughout the ages of diplomatic relations. Kissinger also examines the use of the sphere of influence arguments put forth by the Soviet Union in Eastern and Southern Europe after World War Two; an argument that has been maintained by contemporary Russian foreign relations with regard to the Ukraine, Georgia and other former Soviet satellites in Central Asia.



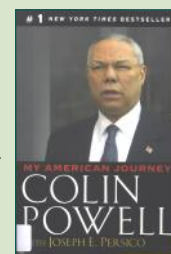
JAMES A. BAKER III: The Politics of Diplomacy

Former Secretary of State Baker's memoirs offer an engaging and candid behind-the-scenes look at the conduct of U.S. foreign policy during one of the most tumultuous periods in recent history. The dramatic political convulsions of his tenure the Tiananmen Square massacre, breakup of the Soviet Union, collapse of the Berlin wall, German reunification, and Iraqi invasion of Kuwait are laced with personal anecdotes and intimate portraits of major world figures. Baker's book is a valuable contribution to the literature on contemporary U.S. foreign relations.



COLIN POWELL: My American Journey

My American Journey is the autobiography of United States 65th Secretary of State Colin Powell. Born in Harlem to immigrant parents from Jamaica, he knew the rough life of the streets. Overcoming a barely average start at school, he joined the Army. The rest is history that Powell himself tells us. This is the powerful story of a life well lived and well told. At a time when Americans feel disenchanted with their leaders, General Powell's passionate views on family, personal responsibility, and, in his own words, "the greatness of America and the opportunities it offers," inspire hope and present a blueprint for the future.



The U.S. Embassy Information Resource Center is open to the public Monday through Friday from 13:00 to 18:00.

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